

Claim Listing

1-50. (Canceled)

51. (Currently amended) A data processing system for supporting web-based commerce and commission tracking on a multi-node network comprising:

a clearinghouse server in direct communication with a plurality of affiliate servers, said clearinghouse server operable to parse HTTP commands received from each of said plurality of affiliate servers, said HTTP commands including an affiliate field comprising one or more subvariables indicating referral activity;

~~a first affiliate website operated by~~ a first affiliate server of said plurality of affiliate servers, the first affiliate server operable to generate ~~the~~ a first affiliate website comprising a primary referral link and a plurality of other information on one or more web pages associated with the first affiliate website, wherein said first affiliate server communicates a HTTP command to said clearinghouse server including an affiliate field indicating a user's use of said primary referral link;

~~a second affiliate website operated by~~ a second affiliate server of said plurality of affiliate servers, the second affiliate server operable to generate ~~the~~ a second affiliate website comprising a secondary referral link and a plurality of other information on one or more web pages associated with the second affiliate website, wherein said second affiliate server communicates a HTTP command to said clearinghouse server including an affiliate field indicating said user's use of said secondary referral link; and

a merchant server operable to generate a merchant website and operable to process an electronic transaction via said merchant website, the merchant server in communication with said clearinghouse server, wherein said merchant server is operable to submit information to said clearinghouse server relating to completion of an electronic transaction by said user on said merchant website;

wherein said clearinghouse server is operable to assign compensation to each of said first affiliate website and said second affiliate website in response to (i) a network-connected user's use of said primary referral link provided by said first affiliate website to reach said second affiliate website; (ii) said user's use of said secondary referral link provided by said second affiliate website to reach said merchant website; and (iii) said user's completion of the electronic

transaction with said merchant site.

52. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 51 wherein compensation is assigned to the first affiliate website and the second affiliate website in equal shares.

53. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 51 wherein compensation assigned to the first affiliate website comprises a majority portion of a commission associated with said user's completion of the electronic transaction, and compensation assigned to the second affiliate website comprises a minority portion of a commission associated with said user's completion of the electronic transaction.

54. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 51 further comprising a database communicatively coupled to the clearinghouse server, the database operable to store data associated with the first affiliate website and the second affiliate website.

55. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 54 wherein the database is further operable to store data associated with compensation assigned to the first affiliate website and the second affiliate website.

56. (Cancelled)

57. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 51, wherein said primary referral link comprises a first sub-link from said first affiliate server to said clearinghouse server and a second sub-link from said clearinghouse server to said second affiliate server.

58. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 57, wherein said HTTP command to said clearinghouse server corresponding to said user's use of said primary referral link is embedded in said first sub-link.

59. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 57, wherein said secondary referral link comprises a third sub-link from said second affiliate server to said clearinghouse server and a fourth sub-link from said clearinghouse server to said merchant server.

60. (Previously presented) The data processing system of claim 59, wherein said HTTP command to said clearinghouse server corresponding to said user's use of said secondary referral link is embedded in said third sub-link.

61. (Previously presented) A method for supporting web-based commerce and commission tracking at a clearinghouse server, the method comprising:

in response to a user computer connecting to said clearinghouse server as a result of accessing a first referral link in a web page of a first server, wherein said first referral link corresponds to a referral from said first server to a second server:

redirecting said user computer to said second server, and

storing a record of said referral from said first server to said second server;

in response to said user computer connecting to said clearinghouse server as a result of accessing a second referral link in a web page of said second server, wherein said second referral link corresponds to a referral from said second server to a merchant server:

redirecting said user computer to said merchant server, and

storing a record of said referral from said second server to said merchant server;

and

in response to an indication that said user computer completed an electronic purchase via

a web page of said merchant server, assigning compensation to said first server and to said second server based on said record of said referral from said first server to said second server and said record of said referral from said second server to said merchant server.

62. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein assigning compensation comprises assigning compensation to said first server and said second server in equal shares.

63. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein assigning compensation to said first server comprises assigning a majority portion of a commission associated with said electronic purchase to said first server, and assigning compensation to said second server comprises assigning a minority portion of said commission to said second server.

64. (Previously presented) Software embodied on a computer readable medium and executable by a processor, wherein said software, when executed on a computer, causes said computer to perform steps comprising:

in response to a user computer connecting to said clearinghouse server as a result of accessing a first referral link in a web page of a first server, wherein said first referral link corresponds to a referral from said first server to a second server:

redirecting said user computer to said second server, and

storing a record of said referral from said first server to said second server;

in response to said user computer connecting to said clearinghouse server as a result of accessing a second referral link in a web page of said second server, wherein said second referral link corresponds to a referral from said second server to a merchant server:

redirecting said user computer to said merchant server, and

storing a record of said referral from said second server to said merchant server;

and

in response to an indication that said user computer completed an electronic purchase via a web page of said merchant server, assigning compensation to said first server and to said second server based on said record of said referral from said first server to said second server and said record of said referral from said second server to said merchant server.

65. (Previously presented) Software of claim 64, wherein assigning compensation comprises assigning compensation to said first server and said second server in equal shares.

66. (Previously presented) Software of claim 64, wherein assigning compensation to said first server comprises assigning a majority portion of a commission associated with said electronic purchase to said first server, and assigning compensation to said second server comprises assigning a minority portion of said commission to said second server.